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Working document

Compilation of Opinions of the Advisory Committee relating to Article 13 of the
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (3rd cycle)

"Article 13

1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.
2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties."

Note: this document was produced as a working document only and does not contain footnotes. For publication purposes, please refer to the original opinions.

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As of 13 May 2016, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities had adopted a total of 36 opinions, of which 10 opinions on Article 13.

NOTE

Based on the information currently at its disposal, the Advisory Committee considers that implementation of certain articles does not give rise to any specific observations.

This statement is not to be understood as signalling that adequate measures have now been taken and that efforts in this respect may be diminished or even halted. On the contrary, the nature of the obligations of the Framework Convention requires a sustained and continued effort by the authorities to respect the principles and achieve the goals of the Framework Convention. Furthermore, a certain state of affairs may be considered acceptable at one stage but that need not necessarily be so in further cycles of monitoring. It may also be the case that issues that appear at one stage of the monitoring to be of relatively minor concern prove over time to have been underestimated.

1. Albania

Opinion adopted on 23 November 2011

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching of minority languages and instruction in these languages

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous cycles of monitoring, the Advisory Committee urged the authorities to apply the criteria for opening a class in a minority language in a flexible way and to look at ways of simplifying the system so as to avoid having numerous categories of eligibility for instruction in minority languages. In addition, the Advisory Committee asked the authorities not to rely on the ethnic origin as stated in birth certificates when deciding on the existence of a need for opening a minority language class.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee notes with regret that the situation as regards teaching of minority languages and instruction in these languages remains largely unchanged from the last monitoring cycle. The issues of concern identified by the Advisory Committee at that time have not yet been addressed.

The Advisory Committee notes that six primary schools and two high schools, with Greek as language of instruction, and four primary schools and one high school with Macedonian as language of instruction, continue to operate in the "minority zones" inhabited by a significant number of persons belonging to these minorities. The curricula in these schools have been amended to allow for teaching the history and geography of the national group in question, with textbooks elaborated by persons belonging respectively to the Greek and Macedonian minorities.

Teacher training courses for teachers in minority language schools have been organised by the Regional Education Directorates in Korce and Gjirokastër.

The Advisory Committee also notes with regret that, according to the information provided by representatives of national minorities, there are no language classes in the Serbian, Montenegrin and Vlach/Aromanian languages in spite of the interest shown by all of these groups in tuition provided in these languages. Representatives of national minorities informed the Advisory Committee that their requests to open classes providing instruction in minority languages have so far been ignored by the authorities. For example, a request signed by 70 parents asking for the introduction of Macedonian language classes in the local school in Bilishta was refused.

The Advisory Committee is particularly concerned by information received concerning the banning by the authorities of private Macedonian language lessons attended by 200 children in the region of Golo Brdo.

Recommendations

The Advisory Committee calls upon the authorities to intensify their dialogue with representatives of national minorities in order to analyse the existing requests of minorities, including those from the numerically-smaller groups, to receive instruction in or of their minority language.

In particular, the Advisory Committee invites the authorities not to rely exclusively on data on ethnicity contained in the civil registers, nor the results of the census of 2011, but instead to respect the principle of free self-identification, while taking into consideration both the subjective choice and the objective criteria relevant to a person's identity, when deciding on opening classes in a minority language.

Teaching of the Romani language

Recommendation from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous cycles of monitoring, the Advisory Committee urged the authorities to develop teaching materials in the Romani language and to take steps with a view to training teaching staff in the Romani language.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee notes with interest that the most recent reform of the school curricula in 2009 has resulted in the possibility of including the teaching of the Romani language in schools at the request of the parents of at least thirteen children. The Advisory Committee notes however that this possibility has not yet resulted in the organisation of any classes of the Romani language, primarily due to the lack of qualified teachers and applications from the parents of Roma children.

The Advisory Committee further notes that, according to the information provided by Roma representatives, there are no textbooks or other didactic aids in Romani.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee calls upon the authorities to adopt the necessary measures in order to train teaching staff and develop appropriate materials for teaching in the Romani language, taking into consideration the Curriculum Framework for Romani, and with a view to creating opportunities for the teaching of or in the Romani language, where there is a sufficient demand.

2. Austria

Opinion adopted on 28 June 2011

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Minority education in Vienna

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee invited the authorities to seek further ways, in close co-operation with representatives of the Czech and Slovak minorities, of ensuring that the Komensky School would be able to continue to operate in

the long term. It also encouraged them to increase subsidies for private institutions in Vienna offering education in other minority languages.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the private Komensky School, providing education in Czech and Slovak has received increased funding from the Federal Chancellery as well as the City of Vienna in recent years. The Advisory Committee notes, however, that the allocations made by the Federal Chancellery for the operational costs of the school are subsidies that are in fact supposed to cover the cultural activities of the Czech, Slovak and, since 2008, Hungarian minority. In addition, the support received from the City of Vienna is reportedly of a short-term nature, which affects the School's ability to plan ahead with some certainty. No progress has been made with regard to the status of the school as a private school so that special provisions for bilingual teaching in terms of number of pupils per class, for instance, do not apply to the school.

The Advisory Committee further notes that education opportunities for other minority groups in Vienna are still limited, including for persons belonging to the Croat and Hungarian minority. Instruction in their languages is provided through well-developed private initiatives but receives only limited public funding. The Advisory Committee notes that the absence of an act related to national minority education in Vienna is considered a challenge by all minority groups, particularly given the fact that important segments of the minority population today live in Vienna and that there is an ever-increasing demand of persons belonging to national minorities for bilingual education in Vienna (see further comments on Article 14).

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee calls on the Austrian authorities to substantially increase the allocations for private education initiatives in national minority languages in Vienna and in other areas of Austria where persons belonging to national minorities reside in numbers outside of their traditional settlement areas, so as to ensure that they have access to minority language teaching in addition to the organisation of cultural activities.

3. Azerbaijan

Opinion adopted on 10 October 2012

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Private minority schools

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to ensure continued support for the establishment and operation of private educational institutions that contribute to the preservation and development of minority languages and cultures, such as the Jewish school in Baku.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that a variety of Sunday Schools exist throughout the country where national minority communities may learn about their language and culture. It notes, however, that these initiatives, while permitted by the local authorities, usually do not receive any financial support but depend on the communities themselves and on the ability and availability of individual members to provide lessons in the minority language. Representatives from a number of national minorities report that they have repeatedly and unsuccessfully requested the authorities to provide premises for Sunday schools (see also comments on Article 5 above), while other communities are provided with suitable buildings. The Advisory Committee observes also in this regard the lack in equality among national minority communities in their access to support for private educational institutions, as no clear procedures or transparent criteria for such public support appear to exist. Sponsorship is reportedly only received from private donors or via Embassies of neighbouring states which, due to the obligation to obtain prior permission, again disfavours some minority communities.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to extend their organisational and material support to private educational institutions that contribute to the preservation and development of minority languages and cultures as far as possible and based on objective and transparent criteria. The rights of all national minorities to maintain their private education institutions must be equally respected.

4. Cyprus

Opinion adopted on 19 March 2010

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Private schools

Recommendations from the two previous monitoring cycles

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to find ways and means, in consultation with representatives of the three “religious groups”, of overcoming the difficulties affecting the educational opportunities in private schools catering to the needs of children belonging to these groups.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the authorities have continued to subsidise access to private schools by Armenian, Latin and Maronite children as an alternative for those among them who find the educational provision of the public system inadequate to their needs. It notes with interest that, while officially under the ownership of the Catholic Church, the Terra Santa school in Nicosia offers a curriculum with a multiethnic and multicultural approach and, in addition to Latins, takes Greek Orthodox

Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians and young people from other religious and ethnic communities. The teaching staff includes teachers from the various communities.

The Advisory Committee notes that the Government awards subsidies to Maronite, Latin and Armenian pupils attending this school as a specific measure of support for the three “religious groups”. At the same time, it has been informed that the current level of subsidy does not adequately reflect the increase in school fees over the past few years, which makes it increasingly difficult for some families to keep their children at these schools.

Recommendation

With a view to ensuring equal access to quality education respectful of the specific identity of the children, the Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to review the level of subsidies provided to children from the “religious groups” for access to private schools catering to the needs of the specific groups, in consultation with representatives of the three “religious groups”.

5. Estonia

Opinion adopted on 1 April 2011

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Sunday schools for national minorities

Recommendations of the two previous monitoring cycles

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee called on the Estonian authorities to pursue efforts to design an improved funding scheme for Sunday schools of national minorities, while ensuring that support for such private initiatives was coupled with adequate measures also in the public educational system.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee is pleased to note that a total of 18 Sunday schools are currently being financed by the Ministry of Education and Research to enable persons belonging to national minorities, including the Armenian, Azeri, Ukrainian, Korean, Uzbek and Russian minorities, to study their language and/or culture. These subsidies are provided in line with the Hobby Schools Act of 2007, while additional subsidies may be provided by relevant municipality or city budgets to minority language private schools to cover the costs of pre-school teachers or teaching aids in line with the Private Schools Act or the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act.

While there are other options to obtain minority language instruction through optional lessons in State schools (see comments on Article 14 below), the Advisory Committee notes the concerns of some persons belonging to national minorities that the classification of Sunday schools as ‘hobby schools’ discourages their being taken seriously. Despite this classification, however, Sunday schools must hold an education license and their teachers

need to fulfil certain conditions before they may be eligible to teach at the Sunday schools which, according to some minority representatives, has constituted an obstacle to the establishment of a Sunday school.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue their support, including financial, to Sunday schools that enable persons belonging to national minorities to study their minority language or culture in line with the Hobby Schools Act, and to find pragmatic solutions to the difficulties experienced by some cultural associations to identify suitable teachers. At the same time, minority language instruction should be further promoted within the State school system, in line with the government's intention to make the study of different languages, including minority languages, a priority in Estonia.

6. Germany

Opinion adopted on 27 May 2010

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Network of Danish minority schools

Recommendations of the two previous monitoring cycles

During the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee called on the authorities to pursue dialogue with the Danish minority on the funding of its school network, to guarantee equal opportunities for persons belonging to this minority in their access to education.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that an agreement has been reached between the *Land* authorities of Schleswig-Holstein, the municipalities concerned and the representatives of the Danish minority on the transportation costs of pupils attending private Danish language schools (see also remarks in respect of Article 5 above). For the 2009-2010 academic year, these costs will be split 50-50 between the *Land* and the municipalities in which these schools are located, placing their pupils on an equal footing with pupils at State schools in terms of financial support.

The Advisory Committee understands, however, that the basic problem will remain in years to come since, in principle, municipalities can cover two thirds of transport costs (compared with one third for the *Land*) but are under no legal obligation to do so for private schools. In this context, the Advisory Committee again points out that private Danish language schools are the only option open to children belonging to the Danish minority wishing to receive education in their own language. It is thus important that they should continue to have access to these schools on an equal footing with pupils from the majority population.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue discussion with all the parties concerned in order to find a satisfactory and lasting solution to the question of how the costs of transporting pupils to Danish schools in Schleswig-Holstein can be funded in the years ahead.

7. Italy

Opinion adopted on 15 October 2010

Article 12 to 14 of the Framework Convention

Teacher training and curricula

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee invited the authorities to take further steps to ensure an adequate standard of teacher training and the publication of textbooks in minority languages. The authorities were encouraged to pay particular attention to minorities without a 'kin state'.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee notes with satisfaction the positive developments reported with regard to the teaching of and in minority languages. It notes that Italy now has a solid network of schools offering teaching of or in minority languages.

In the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, a large number of projects have been implemented over the past few years, with the support of regional authorities, to strengthen the teaching of the Slovene, Friulian and German languages. According to official sources, financial support has been provided for teacher training and development of specific courses and modules, as well as production of teaching material. For example, a language course and other pedagogical materials have been published for Ladins in the area of Belluno, and grammar and vocabulary handbooks for the German minority. In the Autonomous Region of Aosta Valley, methodology for the teaching of Franco-provençal and an electronic Franco-provençal dictionary are under preparation. Also, commendable examples of educational projects - bilingual publications and books for children, acquisition of materials and development of specialised libraries devoted to the minority's linguistic and cultural identity - have been reported in respect of other linguistic minorities, such as the Albanian minority, the Croatian minority and the Occitan minority.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the Italian authorities are continuing to make use of bilateral co-operation (with France, Austria and Slovenia) to strengthen measures to protect minorities in the field of education, whether through teacher training or the preparation or provision of teaching material. It notes with interest a recent co-operative history teaching project with Slovenia, to prepare a history textbook to be

approved by a joint committee of historians from both countries.

The Advisory Committee also welcomes the decision to develop, locally, a common history textbook in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol. It also notes that recent bilateral agreements in the field of education have enabled, in the Autonomous Region of Aosta Valley region, increased exchanges, joint teacher training and pedagogical projects with the Academy of Grenoble and the Academy of Aix-Marseille. This has also opened the way to a future joint French-Italian diploma of secondary studies.

According to information given to the Advisory Committee, a recent review of the situation regarding education for linguistic minorities showed the following priorities for the next few years: systematic teacher training to address the present shortage of qualified teachers; preparation of a professional list of available language teachers to be provided to interested schools; improvement of textbook quality. The central authorities have informed the Advisory Committee that a number of measures are to be adopted at the national level to remedy the shortcomings noted. These measures include teacher training for the twelve recognized linguistic minorities and the production and supply of suitable textbooks, including through a digital database.

Whilst welcoming the measures announced by the Government, the Advisory Committee notes that the economic crisis, along with other factors, is having a substantial impact on the effective implementation of government policies and measures in this field. It expects the announced measures to remain government priorities and the resources provided for their implementation to be allocated in due course to the various stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee regrets to note that few steps have been taken to increase mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue in education. Teaching materials and curricula, especially for the majority population, still contain very limited information on the languages, history and culture of linguistic minorities. According to minority representatives, this information is not always presented in an appropriate manner.

The Advisory Committee takes note of the concern of minority representatives regarding the impact of the education reform that has been under way since 2008 on persons belonging to minorities. According to these representatives, the introduction of higher thresholds for keeping schools open might lead to the closure of some minority schools attended by a small number of pupils and/or their merging with schools where Italian is the language of instruction, resulting in fewer opportunities for tuition in the mother tongue. The central authorities nevertheless were more positive in this respect, pointing out that exceptions would be made for minority education, enabling classes to be maintained even attended by a small number of pupils (a threshold of ten pupils has been established as the minimum).

Minority representatives are also concerned by the reform's introduction of the 'single

teacher' system, which, according to them, will make it particularly difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the type of education provided by bilingual schools, such as the one in San Pietro al Natisone (bilingual tuition in Italian and Slovene).

The Advisory Committee believes that any measures to reform the education system should take into account the specific needs of persons belonging to minorities, and that the best possible response to these needs should be determined in consultation with the minorities' representatives. In any case, it expects the level of protection currently enjoyed by such persons to remain undiminished. Additional efforts are needed as regards communication between the authorities and the minorities on planned measures, and minority representatives should adequately be involved in the elaboration and adoption of decisions concerning them (see also the comments on Article 15 below).

The Advisory Committee notes with concern that, in a situation characterised by an increasing lack of resources, the teaching of the languages of some of the numerically-smaller linguistic minorities is suffering from a shortage of suitable textbooks and qualified teachers, and also, in some cases, from problems due to the absence of a codified written language and appropriate teaching material.

Recommendations

The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to take further steps to enable pupils, teachers and the public in general to learn more about the languages, culture and history of linguistic minorities through textbooks and other educational tools.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to continue and expand measures aimed at increasing the availability of teachers and textbooks in minority languages and to ensure that the present financial crisis does not have a disproportionate impact on these measures. In this context, special attention should be paid to the needs of persons belonging to the numerically-smaller minorities.

The authorities are strongly encouraged to pay all necessary attention, in the context of the education reform, to the concerns voiced by representatives of the linguistic minorities and to endeavour, in consultation with these representatives, to identify solutions that take due account of specific needs of persons belonging to national minorities.

Availability of minority language education

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to ensure that all the schools concerned introduced teaching of minority languages and culture, as required by the legislation, as well as instruction in minority languages at pre-school, primary and lower-secondary levels.

The Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to improve the Slovene language teaching without delay, as provided for by Law 38/01, especially in the province of Udine.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the increasing number of initiatives to facilitate the introduction of teaching of the Friulian language in schools in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and a more favourable attitude to this on the part of the authorities. It also notes a strong demand to learn this language. According to official sources, in school year 2008-2009 there were about 48,000 requests for instruction in Friulian, twice as many as in the previous year, affecting about one third of the schools in the whole region.

The Advisory Committee also notes that legislation recently passed by the region has foreseen the setting up of a standing committee for the teaching of Friulian at school and that a project launched in 2009 in co-operation with the University of Udine aims to introduce integrated teaching of Friulian and English at secondary level.

The Advisory Committee regrets, however, that efforts in expanding the teaching of the Friulian language are subject to delay and difficulties. The absence of specific curricula and the fact that teachers trained to teach Friulian in the region are not recognised by the State, also represent serious obstacles to the development of sustainable high-quality education. In addition to these difficulties and inadequate resources, progress in this field has also been affected by the fact that the Constitutional Court has invalidated some provisions of the regional law No. 29/07 on protection of the Friulian language, including the ones relating to teaching of the Friulian language (see comments under Article 5 above).

The Advisory Committee finds commendable that the Slovene minority has a well-developed network for teaching of and in the Slovene language, including a hundred or so primary schools (in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia) with Slovene as the language of tuition and with textbooks and teaching material in Slovene. In public schools in the province of Udine, Slovene is taught only as a subject.

However, the Advisory Committee is concerned by the worrying information it has received about the private bilingual (Slovene-Italian) pre-school and primary school in San Pietro al Natisone, whose building has been declared unfit for use on safety grounds. At the time of the Advisory Committee's visit to Italy, the school was continuing to operate on an 'emergency' basis.

The Advisory Committee understands that, inasmuch as this is the only school in the province of Udine offering tuition in Slovene (recognised by the State in 2004), it is particularly important for the Slovene community that it should be kept open and given suitable premises. The school could eventually become a secondary school for this community, providing continuity in Slovene tuition and filling existing gaps in this field.

The Advisory Committee notes in particular the concerns prompted by the authorities' proposals to distribute the pupils concerned between schools in other municipalities. It believes that steps should be taken immediately to ensure that the pupils and teachers in question can attend the school programme safely. In addition, given the special importance of this school for the Slovene community, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that a durable solution should be found enabling the school to remain open.

The Advisory Committee also notes with concern that the running of the Office for Slovenian Teaching has been affected by a serious shortage of qualified staff and the very limited support that it receives from the authorities. Consequently, its contribution to maintaining and developing Slovene language teaching is apparently severely restricted.

The representatives of the German-speaking minority of the province of Udine, for their part, expressed their concern about the impact of changes resulting from the education reform on the opportunities to learn German in State schools, and in particular the introduction of English as the main foreign language in Italian schools.

More generally, the Advisory Committee is concerned that efforts to develop and strengthen teaching of and/or in minority languages have been affected by the shortage of financial resources arising out of the current economic crisis and by a lack of investment by the authorities. It has also been informed that significant delays are recorded in the transfer of central-government funds to the regions. Education, which is one of the responsibilities delegated by the central government to the regions, seems to be particularly affected by these problems.

Recommendations

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to continue and step up measures to develop sustainable quality education in the Friulian language as well as, in the regions concerned, in the languages of numerically-smaller minorities, and, more generally, to show a stronger commitment in this field, including as regards financial support.

The authorities are also encouraged to do their utmost to provide more support for teaching of and in the Slovene language and find an appropriate solution to the problems facing the school in San Pietro al Natisone as a matter of urgency, taking due account of the expectations of the pupils and parents concerned.

Education of Roma and Sinti children

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to step up their efforts to ensure that Roma and Sinti pupils attended school on a regular basis and to reflect more of their culture in school curricula as part of a comprehensive

strategy of integration.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts made by the authorities in the last few years to promote and ensure access to education for all Roma and Sinti children regardless of their legal status and that of their parents. It commends the projects implemented by the local authorities and by NGOs in municipalities such as Rome, Milan, Naples, Bologna and Florence to assist children in this field, reduce their rate of absenteeism and integrate them better into the school system. Efforts have also been made to involve the families in these activities, raise awareness in schools and among teachers and prevent discriminatory attitudes.

Under Italian legislation, all children, regardless of their legal status, have the right to education, which is compulsory up to the age of 16. Despite this guarantee, access to school is often difficult for children living in camps, given the isolated location of these camps and the lack of transport between them (particularly the “unauthorised” ones) and schools. According to the Italian authorities, however, public transport between the authorised camps and schools is free for Roma pupils and every Roma child holding a valid residence permit receives around 130 Euros each year to help purchase school supplies.

While welcoming these efforts, the Advisory Committee remains concerned about the situation of children belonging to these communities. It warns that school attendance rates vary considerably and observes that the problems reported in terms of housing and employment and parents’ lack of resources have a negative impact on their children’s access to education and educational achievement. By way of an example, out of the 5,000 to 7,000 Roma children living in the Rome area in April 2008, only 1,500 were attending school according to figures provided by the Prefecture, which means that approximately 75% of Roma children in the Rome area did not receive an education.

The Advisory Committee was informed that, following help from the local authorities towards transport, school supplies and meals, the children concerned have a good attendance rate (as much as 70% in some cases) in some authorised camps. On the other hand, the situation is particularly serious in some “unauthorised” camps. The deplorable living conditions and extreme poverty, the lack of identity papers and of any assistance from the authorities, and repeated forced evictions make it particularly difficult, if not impossible, for children to have access to education and exposes them sometimes to economic and sexual exploitation.

The situation in terms of educational achievement remains problematical. The Advisory Committee notes with concern the particularly high school drop-out rate among children from the Roma and Sinti communities after primary school. It also observes that, for various reasons, including marriage at an early age, which still occurs frequently in these communities, young Roma girls are more affected by this phenomenon. The Advisory Committee also believes, more generally, that the climate of hostility towards the Roma population, as well as the “security package” and the “nomad” emergency-related measures have also contributed to de-motivating Roma children and their parents with regard to education and to increased absenteeism and school drop-out within the Roma and Sinti communities.

As regards efforts to raise awareness of the Roma and Sinti culture among pupils belonging to the majority and other population groups, the Advisory Committee notes with interest that, in the 2009-2010 academic year, the Ministry of Education produced fact-sheets on Roma history for distribution in schools.

Recommendations

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to continue and step up their efforts to support the effective integration of all children from the Roma and Sinti communities into the education system, regardless of their origins and legal status.

Specific measures should be taken without delay to support the families concerned in this field and to reduce as far as possible the drop-out rate among these children. Representatives of the Roma and Sinti should be consulted and involved in seeking the most appropriate solutions to the difficulties observed. In this context, particular attention should be paid to Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe.

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to take more effective measures to raise awareness among teachers and all school staff, and among the parents of children belonging to the majority, of the difficulties encountered by Roma children, their culture and their specific needs. In this context, more attention should be paid to the training and recruitment of teachers and auxiliary staff of Roma and Sinti origin.

8. Poland

Opinion adopted on 28 November 2013

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Private education for national minorities

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In the previous cycles of monitoring, the Advisory Committee called on the authorities to examine the situation with regard to the allocation of subsidies in education and to ensure that the legislative provisions in force were effectively implemented.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee notes with satisfaction that there are no obstacles in Poland to setting up private schools and that faith-based and civic organisations of national minorities, in particular the Jews, Belarusians, Lithuanians and Roma readily use such possibilities. Currently there are 25 kindergartens and 60 schools providing education to children identifying with national minorities and providing opportunities to learn minority languages at an early age.

The Advisory Committee welcomes in particular the authorities continued financial support to such initiatives, in line with the national legislation which guarantees equal treatment of all schools regardless of whether they are public or private.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee calls upon the authorities to continue to support private schools of national minorities in line with the established practice.

9. Sweden

Opinion adopted on 23 May 2012

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Private schools and teaching of minority languages

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

In its previous monitoring cycles, the Advisory Committee encouraged the authorities to continue supporting private minority language and bilingual schools.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee welcomes the positive stance adopted by the authorities with respect to free schools as a source of minority language education, and notes with interest that there have been a number of developments in this field, in particular at pre-school level, following the enlargement of the administrative areas for Finnish and Sami under the National Minorities Act. It notes with particular interest the opening of a Sami pre-school in the municipality of Berg in September 2010, with South Sami as its principal language.

As the Advisory Committee has previously noted, the heavy reliance on free schools as a source of minority language education makes it particularly important that education structures as a whole are developed in a way that reflects and supports such private initiatives. This requires the close involvement of representatives of national minorities in the decision-making process concerning the status, teaching environment and development of free schools.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee again encourages the authorities to continue supporting private minority language and bilingual schools and to involve representatives of national minorities in the decision-making process in order to ensure that initiatives and needs in this sphere are adequately taken into account in the overall education-related infrastructure.

10. "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Opinion adopted on 30 March 2011

Article 13 of the Framework Convention

Private education establishments

Recommendations from the two previous cycles of monitoring

The Advisory Committee, having noted that the prohibition in domestic legislation to establish private primary schools might put persons belonging to national minorities at a disadvantage regarding primary education in minority languages, urged the authorities to review the situation so as to allow the establishment of such schools.

Present situation

The Advisory Committee notes with regret that the situation with regard to the establishment of private primary schools has not changed in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee reiterates its call that the authorities introduce, in line with the first and second Opinions of the Advisory Committee, the appropriate legal guarantees to enable national minorities to set up and manage their own private educational and

training establishments. Legislation and practice must be in conformity with Article 13 of the Framework Convention and the conditions described therein.